

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for exchanging documents in transactions between partners that are joined in an exchange network, the partners communicating with each other via a hub entity, the method comprising:

[[setting up]] storing an agreement associated with each document type for each partner that joins the exchange network, wherein each agreement defines one or more rules about the data format in which the respective partner sends and receives documents of the document type;

placing in a file receive location a document from a first partner, the file receive location being password protected such that only a partner that provides a correct identity with any document it sends may place that document at the file receive location; and

performing steps, by the hub entity, including,

retrieving the document from the file receive location,

validating the document against its respective agreement,

[[mapping]] transforming the document into a standard document [[the]] format [[of which being]] that is partner system platform neutral and that is a different data format than the format in which the document from the first partner was received,

assigning a key to the document for future references,

processing the document based on the agreement, the process including applying rules of the hub entity and rules of the first partner, and

[[mapping]] based on the corresponding agreement, transforming the processed document from the standard format into an altered document [[the]] format [[of which]] that is associated with a second partner and sending the altered document to the second partner [[based on the corresponding agreement]].

2. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the agreement defines business rules that determine how documents are sent and received as well as their format.

3. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the key is unique to the document for all future reference points and it is sent along with the document.
4. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the standard format is a more flexible format accommodating business rules that are common.
5. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein there is a common process for processing the document based on the agreement.
6. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein setting up the agreement for at partner that joins the exchange network involves creating a document-mapping between a partner's native format and the standard format.
7. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein any document-mapping for mapping from a native format to the standard format for any document type of a previously-joined partner that is already present at the hub entity need not be recreated, thereby avoiding document-mapping maintenance each time a net partner joins the exchange network.
8. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the mapping to and from the standard format is document-type-specific.
9. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the document-mapping is created by using a graphical tool in a drag-and-drop fashion.
10. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein once created any document-mapping is stored in a database.
11. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein although the process is similar for each document, the processing result is different for each partner as it is directed by the partner's business rules and policies.
12. (currently amended) A system for exchanging documents in transactions between partners that are joined in an exchange network of a hub entity, the partners communicating with each other via the hub entity using the system, the system comprising:
means for [[setting up]] storing an agreement associated with each document type for each partner that joins the exchange network, wherein each agreement defines one or more rules about the format in which the respective partner sends and receives documents of the document type;

means for placing in a file receive location a document from a first partner, the file receive location being password protected such that only a partner that provides a correct identity with any document it sends may place that document at the file receive location; and

means for performing steps, by the hub entity, including,

means for retrieving the document from the file receive location,

means for validating the document against its respective agreement,

means for [[mapping]] transforming the document into a standard document [[the]] format [[of which being]] that is partner system platform neutral and that is a different data format than the format in which the document from the first partner was received,

means for assigning a key to the document for future references,

means for processing the document based on the agreement, the process including applying rules of the hub entity and rules of the first partner, and

means for [[mapping]] transforming the processed document from the standard format into an altered document [[the]] format [[of which]] that is associated with a second partner and sending the altered document to the second partner, based on the corresponding agreement.

13. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 12, wherein the agreement defines business rules that determine how documents are sent and received as well as their format.

14. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 12, wherein the key is unique to the document for all future reference points and it is send along with the document.

15. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 12, wherein the standard format is a more flexible format accommodating business rules that are common.

16. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 12, in which there is a common process for processing the document based on the agreement.

17. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 12, in which setting up the agreement for a partner that joins the exchange network involves creating a document-mapping between a partner's native format and the standard format.

18. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 12, wherein any document-mapping for mapping from a native format to the standard format for any document type of a previously-

joined partner that is already present at the hub entity need not be recreated, thereby avoiding document-mapping maintenance each time a new partner joins the exchange network.

19. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 12, in which the mapping to and from the standard format is document-type-specific.

20. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 12, in which the document-mapping is created by using a graphical tool in a drag-and-drop fashion.

21. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 12, further comprising a database in which any document-mapping is stored once it is created.

22. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 12, wherein although the process is similar for each document, the processing result is different for each partner as it is directed by the partner's business rules and policies.

23. (currently amended) A method for exchanging documents in a trade of goods transaction between partners that are joined in an exchange network of a hub entity, the partners being part of a supply chain and trading with each other via the hub entity, the method comprising:

sending purchase order document to a seller via a document exchange at the hub entity;

acknowledging receipt of the purchase order document to a buyer via the document exchange if the purchase order document includes an indication that acknowledgement is expected; [[and]]

wherein each of the documents sent or received via the document exchange is respectively [[mapped]] transformed into and/or out of a standard format that is partner and system platform neutral and that is a different data format than the format in which the purchase order document was received and is processed based on an agreement that is partner specific and takes into account rules of the hub entity, wherein each agreement defines one or more rules about the format in which the specific partner sends and receives documents of the document type; and

wherein the document exchange enables trading partners, including the buyer and seller, to exchange documents without the need to consider each other's native formats.

24. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, wherein the trade of goods transaction is repeatable and scalable.
25. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, wherein the purchase order document is a single purchase order document or multiple purchase order documents within a master document, each of the purchase order documents being individually extracted and placed into a message queue for separate purchase order processing.
26. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, wherein for each document that is sent or received via the document exchange the agreement defines the format of that document, the manner in which it is sent and information about its receive location.
27. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 26, wherein the information pertains to username, password and server.
28. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, wherein for each purchase order document conveyed via the document exchange, information about the trade of goods transaction including an order status is recorded to an order database where it can be viewed from within a community application.
29. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, further comprising: instantiating an order process including
- waiting for acknowledgement if the acknowledgement is expected, including
 - monitoring a message queue in which acknowledgements are placed when received; and
 - setting an order status to complete and ending the order process instance if the acknowledgment is not expected.
30. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 29, wherein a timeout defines a wait period associated with the waiting such that when the wait period elapses the instantiated order process initiates a timeout notification and ends the order process instance.
31. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 30, wherein if the wait period elapses a purchase order indicated in the purchase order document is considered void.
32. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, wherein each of the documents has a place holder indication prompting the document exchange to expect follow-up documents.

33. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, wherein each of the documents passing through the document exchange is placed in a file receive location that is password protected so that access thereto is limited to a properly identified partner.
34. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 33, wherein each document extracted from its file receive location is validated against its associated agreement before it is mapped into the standard format.
35. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 25, wherein an order process instantiated in relation to a master document is capable of handling individually each of a plurality of acknowledgments.
36. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, further comprising: detecting any inconsistency between the purchase order document and the acknowledgment; and providing notification of any detected inconsistency.
37. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, further comprising: checking the purchase order document and acknowledgement for any inconsistency relative to an inconsistency threshold defined in conjunction with the agreement, the inconsistency threshold triggering an order cancellation process if surpassed.
38. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, further comprising:
if the purchase order document so requires, providing to the buyer via the document exchange one or more of
an advance shipping notice, and
a functional acknowledgement.
39. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 23, further comprising: providing an invoice to the buyer via the document exchange.
40. (currently amended) A system for exchanging documents in a trade of goods transaction between partners that are joined in an exchange network of a hub entity, the partners being part of a supply chain and trading with each other via the hub entity using the system, the system comprising:
a document exchange at the hub entity, including
means for conveying a purchase order document to a seller,

means for conveying to a buyer an acknowledgement of receipt of the purchase order document if the purchase order document includes an indication that such acknowledgement is expected[[,]]; and [[mapping,]]

wherein each of the documents sent or received via the document exchange is respectively [[mapped]] transformed into and/or out of a standard format that is partner and system platform neutral and that is a different data format than the format in which the purchase order document was received and is processed based on an agreement that is partner specific and takes into account rules of the hub entity, wherein each agreement defines one or more rules about the format in which the specific partner sends and receives documents of the document type; and

wherein the document exchange enables trading partners, including the buyer and seller, to exchange documents without the need to consider each other's native formats.

41. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein the trade of goods transaction is repeatable and scalable.

42. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein the document exchange further includes

a message queue, and an
extraction means,

and wherein the purchase order document is a single purchase order document or multiple purchase order documents within a master document, each of the purchase order documents being individually extracted by the extraction means and placed into the message queue for separate purchase order processing.

43. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein for each document that is sent or received via the document exchange the agreement defines the format of that document, the manner in which it is sent and information about its receive location.

44. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 43, wherein the information pertains to username, password and server.

45. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein the document exchange further includes

an order database,

and wherein for each purchase order document conveyed via the document exchange, information about the trade of goods transaction including an order status is recorded to the order database where it can be viewed from within a community application.

46. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein the document exchange further includes

a message queue in which acknowledgements are placed when received, and means for instantiating an order process including means for

waiting for the acknowledgement if the acknowledgement is expected, including monitoring the message queue, and

setting an order status to complete and ending the order process instance if the acknowledgment is not expected.

47. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 46, wherein the document exchange further includes

notification means, and

wherein a timeout defines a wait period associated with the waiting such that when the wait period elapses the instantiated order process prompts the notification means to provide a timeout notification and ends the order process instance.

48. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 47, wherein if the wait period elapses a purchase order indicated in the purchase order document is considered void.

49. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein each of the documents has a place holder indication prompting the document exchange to expect follow-up documents.

50. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein the document exchange further includes

a file receive location for each of the documents that is password protected so that access thereto is limited to a properly identified partner,

and wherein each of the documents passing through the document exchange is placed in its file receive location.

51. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 50, wherein the document exchange further includes

validation means,

and wherein each document extracted from its file receive location is validated by the validation means against its associated agreement before it is mapped into the standard format.

52. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 42, wherein the document exchange further includes

means for instantiating an order process which when instantiated in relation to a master document is capable of handling individually each of a plurality of acknowledgments.

53. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein the document exchange further includes

means for detecting any inconsistency between the purchase order document and the acknowledgment; and

means for providing notification of any detected inconsistency.

54. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein the document exchange further includes

means for checking the purchase order document and acknowledgement for inconsistency relative to an inconsistency threshold defined in conjunction with the agreement, and

means for instantiating an order cancellation process, the inconsistency threshold triggering the order cancellation process if surpassed.

55. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein the document exchange further includes means for

if the purchase order document so requires, providing to the buyer via the document exchange one or more of

an advance shipping notice, and

a functional acknowledgement.

56. (previously presented) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein the document exchange further includes means for providing an invoice to the buyer via the document exchange.